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Letter dated 15 January 2014 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Uganda to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit to you a letter from the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs in charge of International Affairs of the Republic of Uganda, Okello Henry Oryem, in response to the recent report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo that has been leaked (see annex).

I will be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) John L. **Mugerwa**
Counsellor
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 15 January 2014 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Uganda to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I write to you in response to the report authored by the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo that has been leaked. The leaked report contains baseless and fabricated allegations against my Government.

From 16 to 18 September 2013, the Group of Experts visited Uganda. Ready and willing to cooperate with the Group, the Government of Uganda went to great lengths to prepare for the visit. It arranged for the Group to meet and engage with a broad range of stakeholders. Field visits were organized and various pieces of information requested were provided.

However, the leaked report by the Group clearly demonstrates that the efforts made and information shared with it were disregarded. The report contains an old narrative making baseless and false allegations, circuitously questioning the credibility of information given to the Group by my Government. I will cite some examples.

On the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23), for example, in addition to the information provided to the Group, arrangements were made for the Group to meet and interview M23 combatants and also visit Luzira Government Prison to meet and interview interned M23 recruiters. Information was provided to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Group of Experts when M23 combatants fled to Uganda in November 2013. The Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism, of which the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a member, was also invited to verify their presence. However, the Group disregarded all this and instead chose to draw its conclusion from other sources. I must also add that the M23 combatants have been moved further away from the border area so that they do not constitute a threat to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We expect that, with the conclusion of the Kampala talks, modalities will be finalized quickly to resolve the issue of these M23 combatants.

On the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), substantial information was shared with the Group on the terrorist activities of ADF. The report underrates ADF terrorist links with Al-Qaida and its threat to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda. It does not give a full and true picture of the threat posed by ADF. It ironically draws no "conclusions", as it does elsewhere in the report for a group responsible for the rape and murder of over 20 people in Beni, eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, as recently as December 2013.

On natural resources, information provided on the efforts undertaken by Uganda to curb smuggling, promote awareness and regulate the sector to facilitate the implementation of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region regional traceability mechanism was ignored. The Group also ignored information shared with it in relation to the closure of the border at Bunagana, where restrictions put by the Government still apply, as the Uganda side of the border is still closed. The Group was provided with information regarding ivory seizures at the time of its visit and information on national and regional efforts undertaken to curb all trade in ivory. This was ignored.

It is important to emphasize that the Group was not only provided with information during and after its visit, but it was fully aware of the readiness of Uganda to engage with it through the relevant focal points in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Permanent Mission in New York. Regrettably, the Group did not share this information and it is not the first time this has happened. In its report of July 2013, while the Group annexed the letter written by the Prime Minister of Uganda dated 23 October 2012, it did not annex his letter of 12 November 2012, which contained the detailed response of the Government of Uganda to the specific allegations contained in the Group's final report of November 2012. This is an important record that should be put right.

It is difficult to understand why the Group came up with falsehoods and misconceived conclusions against Uganda in this way. The recommendations related to Uganda in the report are pointless and should be ignored. The report clearly fails to acknowledge political realities on the ground, including the unwavering efforts of Uganda in pursuit of peace, stability and security in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Finally, the work by the Group of Experts is lacking in objectivity, impartiality and transparency. The Group's work method even denies Uganda a right of reply. We question its motives and the reasons for the constant leaks of the Group's report. The report in our view is obstructive in the ongoing efforts of the region, the Security Council and the wider international community in bringing peace and stability to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I hope that this experience, which is not the first, will provide lessons for the Security Council and its sanctions committees on the working methods of the Group of Experts.

I would be grateful if this letter could be circulated to the members of the Security Council at the earliest opportunity so that it can inform the members of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who will be discussing the report.

(*Signed*) Okello Henry **Oryem**
Minister of State for Foreign Affairs
International Affairs